



## School Nominee Presentation Form

### ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

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#### School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.
8. The school or its district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or a copy of a non-discrimination policy, upon request. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a nomination and/or rescind an award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

### U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

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Name of Principal:


(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name:

(As it should appear on an award)

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space*

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Date:

Name of Superintendent:

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)



District Name:

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
(Superintendent's Signature)

**Nominating Authority's Certifications**

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency:

Name of Nominating Authority:  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

**Don Whitehead** Digitally signed by Don Whitehead  
Date: 2024.01.19 10:41:40 -05'00' Date:

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

**SUBMISSION**

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509  
Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

**Public Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.



## 2023-2024 Florida Green Ribbon Schools Application

### Nominee Information

School Name: Northside Christian

Address: 7777 62nd Blvd City: St Petersburg State: 33760 Zip: 33760 Twitter: @NCSMustangs Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ncsmustangs/>

Principal: Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): Mr. First Name: Brandon Last Name: Elam Email: Brandon.Elam@ncsschools.com Phone: (727) 541-7593

Lead Applicant (if different) Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): Mrs. First Name: Jessica Last Name: Lamm Position/ Role (Teacher/ Sustainability Director/ Facilities Director/Parent): Teacher Email: jessica.lamm@ncsschools.com Phone: (813)361-2921

**School Type and grade levels served:** Pre-Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Provide percentages, if any are relevant to your school:

Free and Reduced Price Lunch: n/a

Minority: 24%

Limited English Proficient: n/a

Special Education: n/a

Graduation Rate: 100%

Attendance Rate: 100%

### Provide the following:

Total Enrolled: 895

## | Green Ribbon Application | Northside Christian High School

Last school year in 2022, Northside committed to the growing demand for well rounded, problem solving students by creating a STEAM elective course. The goal of the class was to expose students to AP WE Certification attributes: local, regional and global learning through service projects. Our interests ranged from adoption, reducing poverty through education, mental health struggles with social media and overall earth sustainability. In just one year, these students accomplished a great deal on their own and even more importantly planted the seed for many other projects that are currently underway. We were fortunate enough to receive the Green Apple Certification in 2023 and are fully committed to continuing our goals to reach the Green Ribbon Award this year. All 6 students were recognized by AP College Board for their projects. This year we have 6 new students who have continued the work of the previous class and also added in their own ideas. You will hear the blend of the established and the growing projects in this report. I would like to note that this program is completely student led, and this is the only paragraph of the application that I have written. This is to assure the committee that what they are seeing is truly the work of my students and their commitment to making progress for their generation and those to come. As we believe that those that find their passion are the ones who feverishly fight for what they believe is right.

## Summary Narrative :

Northside Christian School is focusing on water conservation, efficiency, and overall usage education. For example, as of this year we have converted all old water fountains across the school campus to water bottle fillers. The elementary school has installed rain barrels around their campus to not only aid in flooding, but also to teach water recycling for plants. We do not have a sprinkler system on campus, so using this recycled rainwater for plants around campus is essential to their survival. Also this year, all sinks on campus are now low-flow sinks and showers are water efficient. Around campus we have changed landscaping to consist of Florida native plants. According to The University of Florida, “They are the best species adapted to local conditions that thrive with the least care and create a sense of place.” These changes not only improve water quality and efficiency but also teach children valuable life skills like the water cycle, plants and responsibility. By increasing awareness of these complex systems, they can initiate change within their own lives and households. The school currently tracks water usage at around 1606 gallons annually, but is planning to implement water assessments to be more proactive about water usage. The goal is to create an overall more sustainable and efficient school environment.

In addition to water conservation, Northside Christian encourages alternative transport options such as cycles, skateboards, scooters, and bus rides to school. In response to our work last year, the school has installed a bike rack at the front of campus. We currently have a bus that services grades Kindergarten through twelve. While this alleviates some parent hardships it also reduces the overall car usage on campus. This also aligns with one of our other initiatives to improve air quality by reducing the number of cars idling on campus. This year we have proposed a buddy and reward system to encourage carpooling amongst students. Parents would simply put their names and locations in so that families in the same area can pair up and find each

other. As students use these alternative means of transportation, they could earn different rewards in the cafeteria or the school store. The National Association for Pupil Transportation states that alternative transportation solutions provide stability and continuity in education, contributing to better academic performance. We believe that as students have reliable and consistent means to attend school, they will feel more secure in attending. Northside Christian is not only committed to maintaining its current support for alternative transportation but also expanding its reach to welcome more alternatives.

The focus is not only confined to physical approaches, but also to the mental needs of our campus. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is facing a significant problem of loneliness and poor mental health. This year Northside has taken many steps towards providing mental health education and alternatives. Unplugged is a club that aims to unite students through various non tech activities such as board games, book clubs, debate, problem-solving, and art. Members meet weekly to learn and play games, and volunteer to teach them at group game nights. The club raises funds for both its improvement as well as non profit organizations for teen mental health. This club is currently run by our STEAM Class and hopes to create a strong foundation to grow next year.

One of the first goals Northside has is to minimize waste and provide nutritious food to all students. The cafeteria head has been working for over 20 years at Northside to have a specific lunch quantity of food at all times that is specialized to our students. This is closely monitored to prevent waste and provide fresh, healthy food. Students in STEAM class propose a vending machine after 2:00 for extracurriculars, providing snacks and money for the Blessings In a Backpack program. This initiative aims to help students who may not have enough food to eat on weekends.

Northside Christian School is also actively involved in community improvement through various activities such as community groups, weekly chapel sermons, student-led clubs, and homecoming week activities. These activities help students form bonds and learn about each other, leading to greater engagement and achievement in their classes and extracurricular activities. The school also hosts weekly chapels, student-led clubs, and participates in community cleanups. Homecoming week offers competitions and food donations, with the school collecting nearly 7,000 items. Additionally, the school hosts yearly block parties and assembles Operation Christmas Child Boxes annually to help in need in many under privileged countries.

Northside Christian Elementary School focuses on environmental and sustainability education through technology-based teaching methods, such as iPads, SmartBoards, and Promethium tables. The Pre-Kindergarten playground, designed by the high school's STEAM class, incorporates the natural world into everyday teaching. The garden teaches students about pollinating insects and the importance of maintaining a healthy environment. STEM kits in classrooms help develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. An outdoor lunchroom teaches students about environmental responsibility. Field trips to the dump and Dakin Dairy Farms teach about waste disposal and recycling. These efforts aim to plant the seed of sustainable practices into the next generations creating an exponential ability for change.

## **Pillar 1: Reducing Environmental Impact and Costs**

In the first pillar, our main goal is to reduce environmental impact and costs on our campus. We have already taken steps toward, and are in the process of improving our water quality and conservation, reducing waste production, providing alternative transportation, using our campus ecologically, and decreasing automobile emissions.

Our school is focused on water conservation, efficiency, and improvements. One of the first things we did to be water efficient was to start converting our old water fountains across the school into water bottle fillers. Most of our old water fountains are now water bottle fillers. These fillers help us use fewer plastic water bottles and spread fewer germs; this increases the water quality and efficiency and makes it overall more practical. We also implemented five rain barrels, with plans to add more to use rainwater for campus planters. This lets us conserve our overall water usage for drinking and increases our efficiency as the rainwater is used for sprinklers. Another performance improvement is our low-flow sinks, which, due to the fact that they save water with no monetary or usage downsides, make our sinks more efficient and water-conserving. We also implement Florida native plants all around our school by replacing the old ones. For example, we have changed the plants in the front of Northside, the office, the preschool, and most plants around our school. Which not only helps the environment and landscaping, but they also help the kids learn valuable lessons and life skills like water cycle plants, responsibility, and being effective in watering them. Teaching our kids to learn about water, plants, etc is at the core of conservation in our daily lives. This lays the foundation for our future generations to reinforce our water efficiency. Florida native plants require less water, which helps our water supply, the environment, and makes it easier to keep them alive. Although we currently track our water usage at around 1606 gallons annually, we will be implementing water assessments to help us be more proactive about water quality.

Our school is highly focused on the impact we leave on our environment, specifically by reducing our material waste production. First off, we track our waste usage in tons by the Waste Management Company that handles our trash pick up. This gives us a tangible number to look at



for future comparison. We currently have a regular trash dumpster and a recycled dumpster for cardboard and paper. Along with the Green Apple Certification liaison, we have been working diligently to find a company to expand our recycling to include plastic. We currently produce 1086 cubic feet of waste per year, but we are looking to lower it in the near future by turning to digital books, notes and reducing our one use items such as plastic forks etc. in the cafeteria. This year Northside began recycling—not just our paper but also our food. Currently, we recycle 84 cubic feet of paper annually. We are using water bottle fillers that help us reduce the amount of plastic water bottles used, which contributes to the post-consumer plastic waste. According to the University of Michigan Dearborn post-consumer waste is around 5% in the USA as of 2021. We are also looking to recycle our food from the cafeteria to reduce our environmental impact by composting, which doesn't just reduce our food waste but also helps increase plant health, without the use of harsh chemicals. Lastly, we are taking strides to reduce our overall waste, by reusing and donating technology. Currently, we are trying to make a student system to help repair broken iPads using donated parts to be able to reuse or donate these repaired iPads rather than discarding them. This not only reduces waste production but also helps technical students chase their passions. Lastly, we are transferring to a more digital system to reduce our waste of old library books and textbooks. Having a digital book base, not only enables students to have more books available to read for enjoyment or Accelerated reader, but also has less impact on the environment as they age out and are irrelevant. With most High School classes shifting to online textbooks, we have less paper waste and reduced costs for students. Decreasing our physical book space enables us to transform the library into a multi use zone that can still be used for studying or reading, but also house activities that help grow our community such as the Unplugged club.

For means of alternative transport, Northside Christian both allows and encourages cycling, skateboarding, or using scooters, and offers bus rides to school in the mornings. Multiple teachers on our campus, including Mr. Matthew Lameyer, ride their bicycles to school. Last year we installed a bike rack on the school grounds that can be used to lock up bicycles or scooters. As a school, we not only support alternative transportation, but even encourage it. Carpooling is an idea we are in the process of making viable for our students. We have considered creating a simple form or application where students can sign up, with their parent's permission, and be carpooled from nearby zones. Mr. Lameyer has personally lent out a bicycle to one of his students, as well as allowing students to leave their bicycles in his room whenever they had no lock. There is only one bus that goes out in the morning, and it only picks up on 62nd Avenue North, but we would like to send out 1 or 2 more buses to other areas to provide students with more alternatives. We intend to incorporate a reward system for students who arrive at school on bikes or carpooling as an incentive. The National Association for Pupil Transportation says that "Alternative transportation solutions can provide stability and continuity in their education by ensuring they have reliable transportation to and from school." This stability can contribute to better academic performance, as it reduces the stress and uncertainty associated with "transportation issues" which is why we find it crucial that we maintain our current support for alternative transportation, and that we also branch out even further to welcome even more alternatives for our students.

In terms of Northside's ecological use of grounds, we have laid the foundation for better use of many areas and are hoping to expand on them in the future as funding becomes available. For example, the school's STEAM class is currently in the process of planting a tree in the preschool in order to provide shade for both the young scholars and the current garden housed

there. The PreSchool has a whole curriculum developed to teach students in this outdoor learning space. Providing this area to explore is highly beneficial to our students – “Gardening is educational and develops new skills including: Responsibility, from caring for plants, understanding, as they learn about cause and effect (for example, plants die without water, weeds compete with plants), and self-confidence, from achieving their goals and enjoying the food they have grown” (the Better Health Channel). We are also planning to increase the current number of rain barrels and add a composter to our campus. We are on track to change the current sprinkler system in order to more efficiently water the grounds that truly need it, as well as relocating our portable classrooms so that the grass field can be used for physical education instead of being a footpath. We are also set to have new facilities and even a second story in our elementary within the next five years that are designed to house the increasing student body while minimizing the building footprint on our campus. Lastly, we are installing what we have designed and called “Activity Ports.” These ports are meant to be solar powered charging stations for student iPads and laptops that double as a form of a lending library, offering various outdoor activity alternatives in a basket such as a baseball and bat, a frisbee, a football or soccer ball and more. We intend to work on creating and installing at least three of these energy alternatives in the STEAM class second semester.

Though our school is a 100% smoke free campus, we are currently lacking in our emission enforcement. Because of this, we are enacting the rule that no bus on our campus will idle while waiting for students to board. According to the EPA, “Not only can diesel exhaust from idling pollute the air in and around the bus, it can also enter school buildings through air intakes, doors, and open windows. Diesel exhaust pollutants contribute to ozone pollution, acid rain, and climate change.” This threat is minimal in small amounts, but because the buses at

Northside tend to idle for about 15 minutes on campus per trip, and usually take around 20 trips per week, along with the large carline during Elementary pick up, the accumulation will build up over time. Along with this new rule for buses, we will also be placing “No Idling” signs around the campus in hopes that students’ parents will turn off their engines while waiting in the car line, or while waiting to pick their child up. Education posts will be distributed in our Monthly newsletter to the entire school informing them of the hazards of idling and our commitment as a school community to minimizing idling on campus.

These accomplishments and goals have and will continue to build up our community as a school and keep our campus clean, safe, and efficient in our use of assets and resources. These small steps of improvement not only help in our efficiency, but also with the health of our students and faculty. By investing in small tangible activities, we are redefining our school culture.

## **Pillar 2: Improving The Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

### **Mental Health**

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is currently fighting a massive problem—loneliness. A surprising 73% of Gen Z say they feel alone, even with others. In addition to feeling lonely, teen mental health is currently at an all-time low. 44% of teens say they experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, while 37% of all teens say they have poor mental health overall. In a school totalling over 800 students from PreK to twelfth grade, this means Northside has a substantial population who needs mental health care. Currently, we have one support counselor for our entire campus. While she is spread pretty thin, she has instituted an entire “Art of Happiness” curriculum for the High School that all High School are

required to take. This class is designed to educate students on the science behind social media, friendship and creating meaningful relationships. Next year, Northside has committed to hiring another on campus counselor specifically for Elementary school. It is evident that Northside is committed to tackling the ever growing problem of teen mental health.

Another innovative solution to this problem is Unplugged. Unplugged is a student-created and led club that strives to unite students, break away from their screens, and force them to communicate, problem-solve, and laugh with other people through board games. Members will meet weekly to learn and play different board games. Then, for volunteer hours, members will help teach these games to groups at a “group game night.” This game night will serve as a dual purpose. First, it aims to raise funds, partly to contribute to the club and be used to continue improving the club. Secondly, some funding will go to nonprofit organizations for teen mental health.

To continue improving students' mental health by creating an outdoor space for work would be a significant step in the right direction. Children living in neighborhoods with more green space had a reduced risk of developing depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and substance abuse. Even just being in the presence of indoor plants has noticeable effects. Studies have found this to improve focus, memory, and stress tolerance. More time spent in outdoor light is associated with lower odds of using antidepressant medications and fewer insomnia symptoms. A home's natural lighting is known to impact how you describe your mood. Having an outdoor area for students and staff to work would increase overall student mental health. To address this, Northside has built and installed about 20 picnic tables outside where

students can eat lunch, study or teachers can hold class throughout the day. Various other parts of campus have been paved with round tables to also encourage students to be outside. This year we will be installing a hydroponic plant wall at the front of the school to cover the cold brick of a concrete wall with natural green plants and lighting.

## **Physical Health**

At Northside, students' physical health is at the top of our priority list. According to the American Lung Association, 35% of U.S. kids are exposed to secondhand smoke. This exposure directly results from respiratory infections, ear infections, and asthma attacks (CDC). At Northside, we take pride in being a smoke-free zone. We also take pride in having a full time nurse on campus for all injuries and illnesses. Further, we ensure that all classrooms have dehumidifiers to remove moisture and germs from the air, purifying what students breathe and reducing sickness. These dehumidifiers are reducing the risk of mold. Currently, the water the dehumidifiers collect gets dumped out and wasted when it can be used for a greater purpose. This year with the implementation of a hydroponics plant wall, we could reuse this water to sustain our garden. We are currently looking to expand on the idea of hydroponics by having our own system in the Cafeteria. The plants grown would go towards fresh produce and healthier options for faculty and students. Babylon Micro-Farms is a company that we have reached out to for more information about implementing this idea. They specialize in hydroponics in educational facilities along with a high level curriculum to empower students to take ownership of its growth.

## **Community**

Northside Christian School involves and improves our community by implementing school-wide activities such as community groups, weekly chapel sermons, student-led clubs, homecoming week activities, and more. In 2023, we implemented community groups on Tuesdays once a week in both the middle and high school. During this time, we come together and participate in various activities that help us learn more about each other, and form a closer bond with new friends. According to Van Ryzin, M. *“The 40 percent that nominated their advisor to be a secondary attachment figure reported greater engagement in school and demonstrated greater gains in achievement and adjustment compared to those who did not.”* In addition we have weekly chapels that allow us to come together as a school, take time to praise our Lord, and learn more about his word. We also have the opportunity to create clubs where all high school students can join and participate in all the different activities. In most clubs, students can serve their community by participating in beach and local neighborhood cleanups. Throughout our homecoming week, we get the opportunity to compete as a high school with dress-ups, cheering, and games while helping our community by donating food. This year alone, the school collected almost 7,000 food items between our elementary, middle, and high schools. Outside of school, we also involve our local community by hosting yearly block parties where staff, students, and their families can come together and enjoy an evening of fun. Lastly, we help our community worldwide by assembling Operation Christmas Child Boxes every year. Operation Christmas Child takes shoe boxes full of small toys and items to underprivileged countries all around the world to spread not only the Christmas spirit but also the word of God. As a Christian school this is a huge priority for us on a global scale and this year we exceeded our previous year’s goals with over 500 boxes collected. Lastly, one of the STEAM projects last year created a Blessing Box for a local teacher in an underprivileged community. They designed, built and filled a box designed for the teachers classroom to fill with rewards and school supplies for her students. Any way to reach the people around us who do the most work!

Lastly, as one of our STEAM projects last year, we became the first High School to be designated as a Traffic Free Zone by Stop the Movement. Janessa Shaikh, a current senior, led this charge to not only educate students, but also faculty and parents through a series of in person seminars and educational meetings. This was one of our largest initiatives to bridge the gap in our local community with one of the largest social problems of today's adolescence. With the advent of Snapchat and online gaming, the safety of our students is of utmost importance. And including the entire community and all stakeholders was the best way to accomplish this. Janessa now sits on the advisory board to help design this program for other High Schools as well.

## **Nutrition**

Here at Northside we have two main focuses in the cafe: minimizing our waste and making nutritious food available to all students. Our lunch is bought in specific quantities in order to prevent any waste. This helps with being able to provide students with fresh and healthy food while reducing our overall waste production. Many students stay after school for extracurriculars with no access to nutritious food. So, students in our STEAM class were willing to propose a vending machine that turns on after 2:00 for these students. This vending machine would not only allow students to get a snack to calm their hunger, but also provide money that would serve towards the Blessings In a Backpack program. Currently, the program is under review by administration in hopes that we could implement it in the second semester.

Just like the kids who only get to eat once for lunch, throughout the 7 hours of school, our student counselor knows of a few students that may not even have enough to eat over the weekends. In order to be able to help these students, we are starting "Blessings In a Backpack" program here at Northside. Blessings In a Backpack is a nonprofit organization that strives to



ensure children do not go hungry on the weekends by empowering individuals and communities to take action. By partnering with this organization, we can take action to help those kids in our school that may not have enough and give them sufficient amounts of food/snacks to eat over the weekend. Communication and implementation have already begun with official meetings set for January to start its action.

### **Pillar 3: Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

The Northside Christian Elementary School teaches environmental and sustainability in various ways. Starting at the younger end of NCS is the newly designed Pre-Kindergarten playground. This playground was designed and built by the high school's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) class with the purpose of making it easier for teachers to incorporate the natural world into everyday teaching. In this playground, there is a garden where the kids learn how to plant and take care of various flowering plants that are native to Florida. In this garden, Florida wildflowers attract butterflies which teaches them about the importance of pollinating insects in, not only our community but our world. Other areas of STEM education throughout the school are the STEM kits that kids use in classrooms, allowing them to engage and develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These kits include robotic kits like Indi which teaches kids coding. Another example of these kits are Makey Makeys, which are small projects that allow kids to connect art and academics together. In addition to this, the elementary students have an outdoor lunchroom. This outdoor eating area is beneficial as it teaches each student why it is essential to clean up after themselves for the benefit of their environment and community. Taking their environmental education one step further, the elementary school students attend a field trip to both the dump and Dakin Dairy Farms. On the trip to the dump, they learn about the amount of waste humans produce, the different ways it is disposed of, and the importance of recycling. Taking these examples into consideration alongside

the curriculum of the elementary science lab helps to show how the Elementary school here at Northside currently works to incorporate sustainable practices and environmental education into the minds of the next generation. Looking towards this Spring, our elementary school, with the assistance of our high school STEAM class, is looking to implement a new Earth Day celebration into the curriculum. This plan consists of a week full of fun challenges and activities, all dedicated to teaching K-5 students about our planet and how to care for it. As the kids get older, these challenges and activities get increasingly more intricate. For example, the 4th and 5th graders will be assigned an environmentally threatening agent, such as an oil spill, and have to come up with a safe solution. They will then present these solutions to other classmates and host a fair for their parents to attend. Allowing these crucial lessons and messages to spread into the home of every kid. It is through events like these that Northside plans to expand education geared towards sustainability in our future.

As for the Middle School at Northside Christian sustainability factors are also included in the curriculum. During gym classes, students will partake in nature walks, being shown the intricacies of the environment around them by Mr. Doug Scull. When it comes to the core classes, middle school students are required to take a bible class each year as one of the core subjects. In these bible classes, students will learn Genesis 2:15 in which man is placed in the Garden of Eden by God to do his will, by nurturing every creature and plant, being sure to keep the Garden clean and pure. Following this lesson, they will take a walk around the school and collect litter they see on the grounds. When it comes to middle school science classes, students have projects and units that teach kids about the benefits of composting, stressing the importance of the proper disposal of waste. They also explore how humans have an impact on the food web; if we over hunt or over fish a given area, it leads to an imbalance in the environment, dramatically disturbing the ecosystem and maybe even destroying it entirely.

Finally, the high school at NCS partakes in education about the environment and sustainable decisions by being involved in core classes and extracurricular clubs. Our high school STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) classes are coming to include more and more content in relation to STEM subjects. Our school incorporates STEM learning into the curriculum of the highschool in many ways. For example in senior english classes, our A+ teacher Mr. Lameyer (as appointed by spectrum news) does an entire STEM unit in which the students write research papers on both an engineering project and phosphate mines, that are located just an hour to the east. This is aimed at showing the detrimental impact that mining can have on the land; in the case of phosphate mining it leaves the area radioactive and unusable for years. A number of the teachers also do a unit about this during the early red tide waves that kill millions of fish every year and how this is tied to the use of dangerous fertilizers that contaminate our rivers. Another example of this is the AP US history class, where students take a deep dive into the impact that war has had on the environment, and what steps our culture has taken to reduce the impact that it has on the environment. During a unit about modern military equipment, we look into how sonar can be harmful to marine life and coral reefs, and how the solution to this is to map out where these reefs are and not use these powerful sonar beeps when we are in those areas.

Northside has many extracurricular clubs that focus on promoting, protecting and conserving the environment around us. An example of one of these clubs is the Adventures in Service club. This club does activities such as beach cleanups and assists the school beautification club in keeping our campus clean. As seen, environmental protection is bolstered by extracurricular clubs, paper is conserved via technological devices, and core classes help educate students on the day-to-day ways they can make small changes towards sustainability.

## Works Cited

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Better Health Channel. "Gardening for Children". 31 August, 2023. [[link](#)].

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